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RUEHWN/AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN 5543
RUEHGE/AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN 3617
RUEHKG/AMEMBASSY KINGSTON 8480
RUEHPU/AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE 3491
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RUEHDG/AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO 2764
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA 0380

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SUBJECT: BRAZIL TO OPEN EMBASSY IN THE BAHAMAS

¶1. On February 1, Poloff had a chance meeting with the new Brazilian Ambassador to The Bahamas, Tomas Mauricio Guggenheim, on the street outside their homes. Guggenheim, former ambassador to Gabon, said Brazil was in the process of opening an Embassy in The Bahamas. He is currently searching for an office and "improved" housing space. His presence confirms earlier rumors that Brazil was seeking to open an embassy here.

¶2. Guggenheim has been in Nassau since the beginning of the year, but said he was still waiting on the notoriously unreliable Bahamian protocol chief to arrange his formal introduction to the Government of The Bahamas. PolChief confirmed with MFA that Brazil had yet to receive agreement to open its mission here. In explaining Brazil's interest in Nassau, Guggenheim noted a growing Brazilian business presence in country and Brazil's expanding influence in the hemisphere, including Brazil's work in Haiti.

¶3. COMMENT: Post welcomes an expanded diplomatic community in Nassau, currently represented only by China, Cuba, Haiti and the U.S. Brazil's interest in The Bahamas certainly reflects Brazil's expanded role in the region as shown by its leadership of the multinational force in Haiti. Brazil's interest in cementing support for its UN Security Council ambitions is certainly also factor behind the decision. While not mentioned by Guggenheim as a motivation for the new embassy, Post has noticed an uptick in Brazilian migration through The Bahamas -- The Bahamas may be developing as a more attractive route for Brazilians heading to the U.S. following Mexico's decision to require Brazilians to obtain visas to enter Mexico. The new Brazilian diplomatic presence will be useful if these migration trends continue and engagement with Brazil becomes necessary. END COMMENT.
ROOD